AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1.   (currently amended)   A system for automated dissemination of presence and availability information, comprising:

<u>a computer-readable medium including:</u>

a schedule publication element configured to ~~acquire~~ <u>receive</u> schedule information ~~associated with~~ <u>from</u> a plurality of users <u>through a user interface</u>;

a schedule management element configured to receive schedule information from said schedule publication element and having <u>a</u> storage system configured to store integrated schedule information based on said received schedule information;

a schedule subscribing element configured to subscribe users to automatically receive notifications regarding schedule information;

a schedule distribution element receptive of said integrated schedule information from said schedule management element and being responsive to said schedule subscribing element to maintain a data store identifying those subscribers who have registered to receive notifications regarding presence and availability information and to effect the dissemination of presence and availability to said subscribers, wherein said schedule distribution element effects the dissemination of presence and availability to said subscribers by distributing schedule information according to at least two different modes, wherein one of the modes more restrictively distributes the schedule information than another of the modes.

2.   (original) The system of claim 1 wherein said system disseminates presence and availability information to an instant messaging client.

3.   (canceled)

4.   (currently amended) The system of claim 1 wherein <u>said user interface of said</u> schedule publication element is adapted to obtain schedule information from a calendar service.

5.   (original) The system of claim 1 wherein said schedule management element communicates with said schedule distribution element using a push interface whereby information retrieved from said storage system is automatically sent to said schedule distribution element.

6.   (original) The system of claim 1 wherein said schedule management element communicates with said schedule distribution element using a pull interface whereby information retrieved from said storage system is sent to said schedule distribution element at the request of said said schedule distribution element.

7.   (original) The system of claim 1 wherein said schedule distribution element controls the dissemination of presence and availability information in an open mode whereby a user's entire schedule is made available to subscribers.

8. (original) The system of claim 7 wherein said schedule distribution element in said open mode sends updates to said subscribers whenever the user's schedule is updated by said schedule publishing element.

9. (original) The system of claim 1 wherein said schedule distribution element controls the dissemination of presence and availability information in a sliding-window mode whereby a predefined portion of a user's schedule is made available to subscribers.

10. (original) The system of claim 9 wherein said predefined portion is defined by a sliding window measured from the present time until a predetermined period of time thereafter.

11. (original) The system of claim 9 wherein said predefined portion is defined by a sliding window measured from the present time and including a predetermined number of future status changes in said schedule.

12. (original) The system of claim 9 wherein said schedule distribution element is configured to send notification to subscribers of schedule change information when said sliding window encounters status changes in the user's schedule.

13. (original) The system of claim 1 wherein said schedule distribution element controls the dissemination of presence and availability information in an amendment mode whereby only the changes in a predetermined portion of said schedule are disseminated.

14. (original) The system of claim 1 wherein said schedule distribution element controls the dissemination of presence and availability information in an refreshment mode whereby all schedule information in a predetermined portion of said schedule is disseminated.

15. (original) The system of claim 1 wherein said schedule subscribing element communicates with said schedule distribution element to negotiate whether to accept a subscription request.

16. (original) The system of claim 15 wherein said schedule distribution element controls whether to accept a subscription request.

17. (original) The system of claim 1 wherein said subscription request identifies preferences associated with a given subscriber that mediate how information is disseminated to that subscriber.

18.   (original) The system of claim 17 wherein said preferences are stored in said data store identifying those subscribers who have registered to receive notifications.

19.   (original) The system of claim 17 wherein said schedule distribution element is configured to selectively accept a subscription request even if the identified preferences are not met.

20.   (original) The system of claim 1 wherein at least some of said elements are interactive with one another via network communication.

21.   (original) The system of claim 1 wherein at least some of said elements are interactive with one another via programming interfaces.

22.   (previously presented) The system of claim 1, wherein one of the modes distributes an entirety of a schedule to a subscriber, and the other of the modes distributes a portion of the schedule defined by a sliding window, with a notification being sent to a subscriber as a front of the window encounters status changes in the schedule.

23.   (previously presented) The system of claim 22, wherein a rear end of the window is defined according to a current time, and a front end of the window is defined according to a period of time.

24.   (previously presented) The system of claim 22, wherein a rear end of the window is defined according to a current time, and a front end of the window is defined according to a number of future status changes in the schedule.

25.   (previously presented) The system of claim 1, wherein one of the modes releases all schedule information in a notification, and the other of the modes releases only changes in a schedule portion that is allowed to release in the notification.